

THE 422 f. a
Consolation of the
Soule, being an assurance of
the forgiveness of sinnes, with the most
notable promises of God contained in
holy Scripture, both in the olde
and newe Testament: briefly
expounded and applied,
as hereafter fol-
loweth.

*With certaine examples woorth
the bearing in minde, touching the
great mercies of God, towards
poore, and miserable
sinners.*

When I am troden vnder foote, thy
mercies doth lift me vp againe.

Psal. 94.

Liber Gulielm. Coss. 8. May. 1590

Made by *Iohn Chastanion*, and engli-
shed by H.S. of Greys Inne. Gent.

Pr. 2. S.

*Imprinted at London for Sy-
mon Waterson.*





To the faithfull of the
reformed Church of Metz
grace, and peace through
Iesus Christ our Lord.



SEING it hath pleased GOD (deare bretheren) to make mee an Instrument, whereby to declare his holy worde vnto you, I thought it very needfull to present this little Booke, wherein I entend not to teach any newe matter, but to put you in mind of your saluatiō, which you haue of long tyme knowne, and doe daily heare, to the end, it may be the better rooted in your hearts. And so much the rather, seeing by this you haue at all tymes such meanes to reioyce, and comfort your selues in God, whereby we may gather very many good instructions in Gods schoole, if we bee certainly perswaded of his grace, and indeuour our selues,

vd 47 A 2 selues,

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selues, both to obey him, and to amend that, we finde to be amisse in vs. Also we shall cōtinually lift vp our harts towards him, that we may be partakers of his felicitie, & bountifulnesse, the very ground of our saluation. After which maner, doe the children of God truely exercise them selues in meditation, & looke throughly into the vnspeakable goodnesse of him, by whome they are saued through Iesus Christ, euen with an vndefiled thought and hope. Also it is requisite, that there bee a true amendment of life, agreeable both to the seruice, obedience, & honor, which we owe vnto him, and to cal vpon him vnfaynedly. All which are the chiefest points, comprehended in holy Scriptures, and here summarily spoken of, for the confirmation of our faith, and hope: the full assurance wherof is as it were the foundation of all others, cōsisting in the certaine perswasion, which we ought to haue of the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, to which end also principally the preaching of the Gospell doth attende: by reason whereof S. Paule calleth it, the ministrie of reconciliation. How happeneth it thé, that the Cleargie men in our companie
by

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by an holie, and religious custome, euery
Sonday in morning prayers, declare the
grace of God, that is to say, the forgiue-
nesse of sinnes to all true penitent Chri-
stians, beeing necessarie for euery one to
knowe? Certainly, principally for this
cause, that all may bee perswaded, that
their offences bee forgiven them before
God: and that they bee reconciled vnto
him, and receiued into his grace, what i-
niquitie soeuer they comitted. And this
certaine perswasion ought to be stedfast,
and deeply rooted in our hearts, chiefly
in the tyme of Calamities, and great af-
fliction, whereunto the children of God
are continually subiect, hauing the obsti-
nate, and peruerse worlde their enemye,
which will neuer agree with them, being
set forward, and inflamed by him, which
from the beginning is a murtherer, and
an aduersarie to all mankinde: and neuer
leaueth in rest those, that giue themselves
to the true seruice of their god, but doth
procure vnto them all hinderances and
lets, that he can, and continually assaults
them with mortall warres, compassing
them with euilles round about, & strange-
ly oppressing them, when they doe pro-

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tract tyme. It may seeme then, that for a tyme God doth giue them ouer, and that he is very angrie with them, and that he would vndo them, and that they be lost: but they hauing this full knowledge, that by his infinite bountie and clemencie, he doth receiue them into his mercie, and quiet orders: See how they are reuiued, and comforted, and their consciences in rest. And to this end, is the worde of saluation giuen vnto them, by the which God doth promise to be mercifull vnto them: If then such a simple promise bee sufficient to make them certaine of his loue towards them; how much more will it be, when al other promises doe abound? It is therefore for this cause, that I haue gathered here a certain number of most singuler notes of the holie Scripture, which consequently are added, & which are taken from one, and the selfe same spring, which shalbe like towers, & strong places most high to defend vs against the terrible and perillous assaults of the deuill, and to put off from vs, all incredulitie and mistrust. That, which I present vnto you, welbeloued brethren, I dedicate it to witnesse the good affectio, that God hath

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hath giuen me towards you, wishing that more and more you may be stedfast, and conformable in the faith, and certaintie of the fatherly goodwill of our God. We cannot but alwaies hope well of such a gentle and gracious father, which haue looked on vs a long tyme, with his owne eyes, and hath visited vs, as his owne, only by the true & happy light of his word, and by excellent Shepheards (of which some are already receiued into perpetual rest with the Lord: others serue him yet happely in other places) he hath established the ministrie of his Gospell among you, which you inioye at this present, by his inestimable bountie: although the blustringes of the tempestes lately past, haue brought into many and diuers places some straunge troubles and calamities. This good God neuerthelesse, hath alwaies care to preserue you in such extremities, that you haue continuall occasion to giue him thanks, the very tokens, and witnesses of your faith, which may appeare in that, that you neede not greuously to seeke for the nourishment of your soules three long myles, farre from your houses, neither in painfull and sor-

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Ioh. 10.

Ioh. 8.

rowfull waies. Continue alwaies therefore in this zeale, for the glory of God, and in the confidence of his goodwill, and mercie towards you vnto the ende . I desire those which bee slouthfull to come into the pasture of the Lord, to consider what he sayth in this place, when he sayth: *that his sheepe follow him and doe heare his voyce.* And what he sayth in an other place: *He which is of God heareth Gods worde.* I doe warne them therefore with my brothers and fellowes, to be most affected in it, & not to bee giuen so much to the loue of the world, & to their vanities: to the end that they maye not deprive themselves before they be aware, from the celestially goods and riches which are euerlasting. Deare brethren, I pray to our God & father, that in houlding you alwaies vnder the shadowe of his winges, he may cause you to profite more and more in his holy knowledge, and continually to fortifie you in his seruice, and to replenish you withal the gifts of his holy Spirite, to his honor and glory, & to your consolation.

*Your humble and affected brother
in the Lord. Iohn Chassanion.*



¶ The Consolation of the
Soule, being an assurance of the re-
mission of finnes, with the most nota-
ble promises of GOD conteyned in the holy
Scripture, as well in the old, as new Te-
stament, briefly expounded, and
applied vnto the same.



If hee to whome
the forgiveness of
sinne is giuen, &
fro whome sinne
is put away, bee
happie, as it is
sayd in the xxxij.
psalme: Hap-
pie is the mā to
whom God imputeth no sinne. He nee-
deth not to doubt, but on the contrary parte
he is unhappie, which is tyed and bound in
sinne, he must looke for none other thing but
for his cōdemnation, and ruyne onely. Be it
for a time he liues in ease, & takes his plea-
sure, and altogether giues himselfe to de-
light: though he be increased with honoz, and
euery bodie doe loue and cheare him: yet he
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is neuerthelesse unhappie, if he be not set at libertie by grace, and forgiuenesse of his iniquities: for sinne is a burthen so hard, & heauie, that no man is able to beare it, pulling downe euery one that is laden with it: from whence it appeareth, that some do bowe vnder it, and falles into ruine, and brings them selues into dispayre: as it happened to Iudas. Other being oppressed in such sort, that they cannot scant receiue any comfort and rest. I haue seene a man, which hauing committed, as himselfe doth confesse, some great and notorizous faults, was so abated & troubled in his spirite by the memorie of them, that he did resemble a poore man, which was indepted, and condemned to a greeuous sufferance and shamefull death, he did alwaies grone and sigh with the trouble and paine of his Soule, feeling himselfe so guiltie, and doubting of the mercies of God, for the inormitie of his sinnes: in such sort, that he made not any account to eate any meate, and refused to take any nourishment if hee had not beene carefully mooued thereunto by those which did keepe him companie: his heart being so oppressed with dolor, that sometimes he wished that his bodie might bee punished with Justice, and that hee might suffer some greuous

of the Soule.

greuous paine to make his torment lesse: which hee thought, hee had deserued in his soule: Sometimes in his anguish, he did require to bee comforted, and receiued into the Church by publicke penance, but he was a straunger, and did but passe away. I haue seene an other, which hauing a long time abused the true knowledge of God: yet at the last had such remorse of conscience, which did gnawe his heart so, that he was constrained to lye as sicke, and out of breath. See therefore how horrible & heauie sinne is of it selfe, from which whosoever is lightned, though he bee neuer so poore, miserable, and dispised of the world, or otherwise afflicted, he is neuertheless an happie man. The blinde man of this world doth not esteeme nor iudge of these things otherwise then by apparance of deceitfull vanities, and not in truthe, as it appeareth daylie: but the spirite of GOD doth teach the godly otherwise, as it is aforesayd. That man is then very happy, that feelth the grace of God to be such, as to haue his sinne forgiven him: for then his conscience is in peace and rest, and he feareth not to perish, neither hath he the iudgements of God in horror, but assureth himselfe of his fauour, and bountifullnesse, which God is to be esteem-

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med the greatest, that a man can receiue in this mortall world. Among the Sarasines, those which haue not considered of thinges very narrowlie, haue yet well knowne, that it was a precious treasure not to bee troubled by any committed forfeite: of which the most wittie and sufficient among them haue made a treatise, which he calleth the quietnesse of the Soule: but altogether ignorant of this poynt of the free forgiveness of sinne, as all other Philosophers, not esteeming any other rest of conscience, but in vertue and integritie of life, which is but an imagination of no value before God; for this man is like vnto him, which buildeth without foundation, and would make a shew of that thing which is not. For to come then vnto such blessednesse, and to inioue so happie felicitie, wee must knowe, that GOD to whom we must giue an accompt, is gentle and mercifull, to whom wee ought to haue all our refuge, being certaine, that he will be quiet and mercifull towards vs: neither imputing our iniquities, but will forgive vs them freely.

Then as the most sicke and lingering diseased haue more neede of remedies for to be helped, and eased of their griefe and paine: likewise also the most troubled soules, which
are

Of the Soule.

are tormented with sorrowe, and anguish by feeling, and acknowledging their greatesinnes, dreading the anger and most feareful iudgement of God, haue more neede of consolation, and greater assurances of the mercie of God, whereupon their hope should be totally founded and rooted. Who although some times they be debased by diuers temptations, yet by the mercies of their God, they neuer fall into any dissolation or confusion by dispaire: although it happen, that the most forwarde in Religion and in the feare of God, haue to susteine many temptations of Sathan, who doth often giue them hotte skirmishes, and shooteth against them his popsoned and mortall arrowes, for to abate their faith, and to cast them into euerlasting destruction, if it were possible for them so to fall, and if they some times seeme to doubt, being troubled by distrust, and fearefulness, yet it neuer happeneth, that they can fall utterly from the trust which they once conceived of the mercies of God. David was not without some anguish and perturbation of spirit, when he cried, My soule why art thou vexed, and why art thou so disquieted within me? But when he addeth by exhortation that it should hope still in God, he declareth
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the stedfastnes and constancie of his faith, wherein hee saith, that he was shut vp from the sight of the Lorde, it seemed that by the great aduersitie which hapned to him, that God had cast him of, and quite forsaken him: yet he did not for all this leaue to call and to hope in him: so that in the ende he was highly exalted. And thus it happeneth oftentimes to the children of God, finding them selues intangled with a gulse of euils, their hope seemeth to bee swallowed vp and drowned, although in the end it freshly appeareth, and lifteth vp the head and comming vnto it selfe againe, wholly trusteth in GOD, and resteth vnmoueable vpon his greate bountie and mercie, in which onely they glade and comfort themselves, and not by any vertue or desert which is in them, aluding to that which is in the 9. Chap: of Ieremie: that he which glorieth may glorie in the Lorde, that is in his blessednes, and in his mercie.

In this point then, consisteth our trust, by the which wee must needes see what the foundation is, and how farre it reacheth, if so bee it bee firme and sure, and because wee ought to bee certaine and resolved thereof, for this cause wee will bring forth the holy Scripture, as wel of the Old as New Testament;

of the Soule.

Itament, which are most fit and notable promises of the grace and mercie of God, for the forgiveness of sinnes, which beeing here set on a rowe one by another, and placed as it were on a table all in sight, it shall serue for the instruction of the poore penitent sinner, and that in this wee may keepe some order, we wil first shewe the testimonies which are apparant of the goodnes of God, which is as it were the surest foundation, and the first cause of all our hope. In the second place we wil adde the causes, which are as it were the matter and substance concerning the desert and intercession of our Lorde Iesus Christ the sonne of G D D, then the causes of faith and repentance shall followe, and finally that which belongeth to Inuocation and praier, these are the poyntes and degrees by which the faithfull soule ought to goe vp to the throne, and to the grace of God, for to receiue the consolation and Spirituall health: First therefore it must looke vppon the objects of the loue and mercie of God, and the benefites of Christ, to haue therein a perfect knowledge, then it must by Faith allie, and whollie trust vpon him, with a perfect consolation of God in calling vpon him: it must I say perswade it self of the loue and mercie
of

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of God, and after haue full assurance of the merites of Christ, which cānot be done without faith: it is therefore requisite to vse this prayer, which followeth.

Of the bountie, and mercie of God.

Exo. Chap. xxxiiij.



When y^e Lord passed before Moyses face, hee cryed out. The Lord, the Lord strong, mercifull, and gracious, slowe to anger, & aboundant in goodnes & trueth, reseruing mercie for thousands, forgiiuing iniquitie, transgression, and sinne, & not pardoning the wicked. As God hath created the world, mainteineth and p^reserueth it, so doth he mainteyne, nourish, and giues vs health and prosperitie in this life: wherein he shewes vnto vs his omnipotent and eternall power, his wisdom and wonderfull soze sight, and his great bountie: but in that we haue offended him by our sinnes and iniquities, yet he receiveth vs into his mercie againe, reconciling himself to vs, forgiiuing vs our transgressions: so that in this hee declareth vnto vs his clemencie and infinite mercie, whereof he certifieth and giueth

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giueth vs full assurance in his worde, as he doth in this place to Moses: saying, that hee is not onely the eternall God almightie, but also mercifull and gentle: for to haue mercie and compassion vpon poore miserable sinners belongeth to God: and in that he is of great patience, he sheweth a manifest declaration, that he neuer punisheth the wicked so soone as they offend, but a long time staith for their amendment, before he makes them feelee his wrath and indignation: by which reason, he accompteth himselfe to bee slowe to anger, and of great patience. And in the ende, that none may thinke his mercie be either short, or scant, that it cannot suffice for diuers sinners, he also addeth, that he abundant in benignitie: shewing by the same, that his bountie is so full, that it can neuer bee emptied. He is altogether infinite, eternall, and cannot be restrayned, nor contayned in the heauen of heauens, nor determined in the measure of any time: it can neuer be stayed, being a liuely flowing spring, which cannot be dyed vp: for most certaintie whereof, he maketh mention of his fidelitie, repeating by his promises, by which he may assure vs, that he will mercifull vnto vs: wherein he sheweth himselfe alwaies to be true, in that

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he is aboundant in benignitie, and also faithfull in keeping promise: how full of mercie he is, he declareth in that which followeth, that he is mercifull vnto thousands: wherein wee may learne, that he sheweth not his mercies vnto some little number, or some particuler place, but to many hundreth and thousands: shewing by this word an infinite, and the greatest number that can be expressed: by which maner of speech, diuersitie of ages, and varietie of liues maye bee vnderstood, as it is sayd in other places, that he is mercifull, gentle, and faithfull: in which words, he expresteth that he is alwaies prone and readie to forgiue our sinnes, and to pardon our misdeedes: wherein we see that the true and proper effect of God is, to haue forgiveness of our sinnes. Then to the ende, that none may think that he forgiueth some light offences onely, he vseth diuers words, which comprehend all kinde of sinnes: not only naming the sinne whereby all offences are shewed, but also the iniquitie, which is done maliciously with deliberation and settled purpose, when iniurie or hurt is wrought against others. The meaning then of this worde transgression, is a disobedience, or rebellious action, or intent against God, which
is

ts a greuous and horrible sinne : which although of all others it be most detestable, yet God doth here promise to make full remission, and forgiveness of sinne. Let vs hold this then for a certaine and unfallible rule, that there is no forfeite so great, or transgression so monstrous, but it is forgiven by the meere mercie of God. And whereas it is said in the end, that he forgiveth none: it is onely ment of those, which are wicked and obstinate in their wickednesse, and those which shall feelee finally the severe vengeance of God: For so much then as he is named gentle, it is to poore and penitent sinners, which doe repent them of their sinnes committed: so is he also termed a iust Judge, for to giue punishment to the hard and impenitent sinner, to the ende that none should abuse his grace and clemencie ouer much.

Deut. Chap. 32. ver. 4.

*Ye nations praise him, praise him his people,
for he will auenge the blood of his seruants,
and will execute vengeance vpon his aduersaries,
and will bee mercifull vnto his land, and to his people.*

Moses speaketh this here in his name and authoritie of GOD, as a Prophet, assuring

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ring the people of Israell, that after GOD hath visited them with his rod, and punished them with sudden and straunge calamities for their misdeedes, he would also make punishment of their enemies, and deliuer them from their miseries and tribulations, being mercifull vnto the land: that is, to the inhabitants of the land. The Children of Israell hauing purged themselves, and made them cleane of their finnes by Gods mere fauour and onely mercie, that he might bee alwaies fauourable towards them, and that forraine nations and straunge people might praise the children of God, and haue them in estimation, and accompt them happie in hauing the fauour of such a mightie God, and that thereby others should haue occasion to reioyce together for so great and bountifull benefites frō the Lord. If then the Gentiles had receiued such ioye, as to be partakers of so great happinesse, we must needes esteeme this promise to pertaine to vs also, and that continually, though he doth afflict vs, which is not but in good cause, and iustly for to correct vs for our offences. Yet he is gentle, and very ready to receiue vs into fauour of his bountifull fauour, not imputing vnto vs our iniquities, whereof wee maye haue alwaies
cause

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cause to praise our God eternally, after that
he hath drawne vs forth out of the handes of
the oppressors and calamities of this world,
and hath receiued vs into his eternall rest.

moder. 103. Psal. 103.

The Lorde is full of compassion and mercie,
slowe to anger, and of great kindnesse: he
will not abyaies chide, nor keepe his anger
for euer. He hath not dealt with vs after
our sinnes, nor rewarded vs according to
our iniquities: for as high as the heauen is
aboue the earth, so great is his mercie to-
wards them that feare him. As farre as the
East is from the West: so farre hath he put
our sinnes from vs. As a father hath com-
passion on his children: so hath the Lorde
compassion on them that feare him.

The more a man is miserable and
worthy of death and damnation,
the more the mercie of God sur-
mounteth and ouerpasseth our
miserie and calamitie, which is declared vnto
vs in diuers places of holy Scriptures,
as it may appeare in that, which wee haue
heretofore spoken of, Exod. 34. which porti-
on of Scripture is agreeable vnto this, al-

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although it containe a more ample declaration (so great is the mercies of God) to aduance and amplifie the time & knowledge of him, & his clemencie towards his people by the ministrie of his Prophetes, by whom the mercy of God is shewed vnto vs, either by a singnall promise by holy scripture, and marueilously amplified by comparisons, & parables both fit and excellent to this ende, that we may be better perswaded of y^e Lord, and his mercie as David confesseth, saying, The Lord is mercifull, gentle, slow to anger, and of great compassion. These are the very selfe same titles which God doth attribute vnto himselfe in the place aforesayd, wherein his nature is described vnto vs, because this matter concerneth our saluation principally, for this thing is shewed plainly by his effectes, in that he saith, That he is not alwaies angrie, &c. for seeing we be disobedient and rebellious vnto him, and do not giue him such honour as wee ought, yet he pleadeth not in his wrath against vs, for to haue his right, and that which especially doth pertaine vnto him, but that which hee doth, he doth by admonitions, reprehensions, threatnings of his worde, corrections: that by he may punish the transgressors, and

in this maner it is sayd, that by the space of
fourtie yeeres, he strived in the Wildernes
with a stubber generation, an vnhankfull
people of Israel, as the Prophet witnesseth
in the 95. Psal. vers. 10. Neither leaueth he
here, but doth the like with their posteritie
and offspring, in forbearing with their sinnes
and wickednes, as it appeareth in the first
verse of the 4. Chap. of Hoseas, in all which
places hee sheweth himselfe marueilous pa-
tient, when being Lord almightie, and soue-
raine iudge of all the earth, yet abaseth him-
selfe so much as to contende and maintaine
his right against so poore and feeble creatu-
res, whome he might haue destroyed and o-
uerthrowen in a moment, if he had extended
his iust iudgement & seueritie against them,
for although hee might iustly complaine of
vs at all times, and at euery hower, because
of our wickednesse, yet hee is so mercifull,
that he chideth vs not continually, but many
times demisseth all complaints and suites,
and yeeldeth vp his owne right, because his
mercie endureth for euer, neither doth he
correct vs continually as we deserue, neither
is he angrie with vs for euer, and although
he punish vs for our iniquities, yet not accor-
ding to the custome of men, who suffer them

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selues to bee caried away, by the rage and strength of her violence and excessive affections, but according to the reprehension and feeling of those, which hee striketh with his rodde, and visiteth with his Plagues, if hee seeme to be angrie, it is for a time, it can not continue for euer, neither last long. Wherefore they which be stricken by him, doe truely feelee it, and makes their complaint vnto God saying, why: dost thou continue thine anger for euer: or shal thy wrath burne against the sheepe of thy pasture? Psal. 74. How long Lord shal thine anger continue without ceasing? Psal. 79. vers. 5. But if we consider the greatnesse and multitude of our sinnes, wee shall finde, that the wrath of God is of smale continuance towards vs, seeing we bee not consumed of him, we may finde him as wee imagine sharpe, whereas on the contrary, we shall thinke him in his great and inestimable goodnes freely to forgive vs, after so many sorts and fashions. For this cause it is saide, that his wrath continueth but a short time, but in his fauour resteth life euerlasting: Heauines may lodge with a man one night, but ioye commeth in the morning: as it appeareth by this which followeth. The church speaking vnto God, by declaring his euerlasting

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ing mercie, that although he hideth his face
from them, and consumeth them because of
their sinnes; yet in as much as they bee the
worke of his owne hands, he will not suffer
the Cittie of his Sanctuarie to lye waste.
Esay. 54. For after that GOD had afflicted
Israel by the Asserians, and troubled them
by the Madianites, by the Philistines, Moa-
bites, and such other nations that knew not
him, he sufficiently sheweth, that he was an-
grie against his people: yet in that he raised
by Judges, Heads and Captaines, by whom
he deliuered the from the hands of their op-
pressors, and gaue them quietnes and peace
in the Land, wherby he caused them to know
that his indignation was past, neither did it
continue or last for euer; The captiuitie of
Babylon was an euident testimony of the
wrath of God against the Jewes: yet by the
Commandement and Edict of Cyrus hee
brought them backe againe into their coun-
try, and caused the people to knowe that hee
had altogether ceased from his anger, and
put away the burning of his indignation, as
he sheweth in the 85. Psal. vers. 4. See how
he hath quieted himselfe, and doth not hold
his anger for euer. But all this which is spo-
ken, toucheth the faithfull onely, as for the
unfaith-

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vnfaithfull, which do not beleue the wrath of God remaynes on them, as it is said. Ioh. Cha. 3. ver. 36. The third effect of Gods clemencie, & the cheefest towards vs is, that he rewardeth vs not according to our wickednes, neither correcteth vs according to our sinnes, for the fruites and reward of sinne is anguish, tribulation, damnation, and death on euery soule as it is written to the Rom. Chap. 2. ver. 9. and Chap. 6. ver. 23. Then if God should punish vs, and handle vs according to our deserts, we should be exceedingly afflicted, and continually in anguish without ende: yea, one should bee alreadie ouerthrowen and destroyed, but in as much as he spareth & forbeareth vs, defending vs from so many perills, and deliuering vs from so manyfold dangers, and which is more, that he maketh vs knowe that we be his, and adorneth vs with all the giftes of his holy spirit, and putteth vs in hope of life euerlasting: he sheweth manifestly by these, that he doth not reward vs according to our deserts, neither recompence vs as we haue deserued. By nature therefore we doe nothing but offend, yet for our unhappines hee refozeth goodnes againe. Therefore it is sayde, that there is great mercie with the Lorde, true it is,

of the Soule.

h. s, that sometimes hee correcteth vs for our
e- wickednes, but neuer chasteneth nor puni-
pe sheth vs according to our desertes: no more
d- then if he had not regarded them, or as they
e- had neuer bene committed, seeing then that he
s- remits & wholly forgives vs, by which it is
h- sayd, that the mercies of the Lord is ouer all
his workes, and his goodnes reacheth vnto
the cloudes, not that it endeth there, for it can
not be contayned in the Heauen of heauens,
but because in this world nothing can secine
higher then Heauen, which is raysed aboue
the earth by an incomprehensible distaunce,
as it is said in the Psal. 36. that the goodnes
of God reacheth vnto the heauens, therefore
it is added afterward, that it is excellent, it
is ouer our heades, it doeth ourpasse our
sight, it is altogether to be marueled at, this
is the height, the breadth, the deapth of the
loue of Christ, which is spoken of in the 3.
Chap. to the Ephes. It is marueylous high
and wonderfull to behold, it reacheth to the
deepest beneath, there is nothing which the
spirite of man can Imagine to bee greater,
but onely Gods loue and bountie towarde
vs, who from the highest Heauens, from his
celestiall and glorious throne vouchsafeth to
come to the bottomlesse Pit of the earth, to

drawe

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drawe vs from it, and to make vs ascende
where hymselfe abideth, it scatcreth it selfe
here and there, in length infinite, in breadth
wonderfull, so that among so many regions
the people may feele the vertue of it in their
hearts by the holy ghost, and yet wee must
knowe, that God neuer useth this clemencie
to them which shewe themselves profayned
and cōtemners of his grace, but those which
doe feare him and sheweth him honour and
reuerence, therein lyeth properly the great-
nesse of the bountifulnesse of the Almightye.
This is againe shewed by a notable effect,
when it is sayde, that hee casteth from vs our
offences: as for the wicked, their malice doth
not remoue, but remaynes still lying euen
at the gate: as the Lord speaketh of the sinne
of Cain Gen. Chap. 4. ver. 7. concerning
the offences of the faithfull, although they be
set before thē, and that they doe present them-
selves oftentimes before the eyes of y^e soule:
as it happened to the Prophet, when he said,
that his sinnes was continually before him.
Psal. 51. ver. 5. which is nothing vnto them,
but an exercise of true repentance, to bring
them vnto humilitie, and after makes them
more circumspect: yet neuerthelesse, in re-
spect of Gods mercie, they be all put away:

for

of the Soule.

for he putteth them farre from him, scattereth them abroade, and casteth them behinde him, neuer to be remembred againe. Which is shewed by a comparison of the distaunce betweene the East and the West, which is the farthest distaunce that can bee imagined vnder the Sunne: euen so then, as the East is farre from the West, and the West farre from the East by a separation and great distance: euen so farre GOD doth cast all our sinnes away from vs: yea so farre, that they cannot be perceiued or no more appeare, the that which is carried away from one ende of the world vnto the other. And to confirme al that is spoken before, God is in holy Scripture compared vnto a father, which is mercifull vnto his children: for as you see a father couer many of his sonnes imperfections, neither vseth such rigour and seueritie towards them as he might, but spareth them as much as possible he can. In like maner also, God (who is our great and celestiall father) is moued with all pittie & compassion towards vs, and readie to forgiue vs all our sinnes: so that wee feare to offend him, neither doe abound in our iniquities.

Psal.

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Pfal. 130.

If thou O Lord shouldst straightly marke our iniquities, O Lord who should stand before thee: but mercie is with thee, that thou maiest be feared. Let Israel waite on the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercie, and with him is great redemption, and he shall redeeme Israhel from all his iniquities.



There is none of vs, which are not in daunger to fall into eternall ruyne and destruction, if God should looke narrowly into our sinnes and offences, to examine them in seueritie, and execute a iust punishment for them: for there is no man that could stand before his tribunall Seate, nor bee able to iustifie himselfe by his owne righteousness. Therefore David in his prayers and supplications to the Lord, desireth him not to enter into iudgement with him, as he had deserved. Psal. 144. ver. 2. neither may this seeme straunge, or spoken without speciall purpose, but it is the same in substance, which the author of this Psalm speaketh of here: which is done for our consolation and trust, that forgiveness of our sinnes only cometh from the Lord: neither doth he
take

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take any heede of them therby to condemne vs, but he sheweth himselfe gentle, and mercifull to vs: which made the Prophet in conclusion to say, That because there is mercie with God, therefore he should be feared. And that this might not be done in himselfe onely, he stirreth vp all sortes of men, and euery state and cōdition of nations to the due feare and tye reuerence of his Maiestie, thereby that high and lowe, rich and poore, one with an other might wholly giue themselves to serue him in thankfulnessse and heauenly melodye: for the more he powreth on vs his bountifull and mercifull liberalitie, the more we are bound to him, and ought to be much more desirous to serue him in holinesse and righteousness all the daies of our life. So that the forgivenessse of our sinnes is ioyned with the honor and glorie of GOD, and our obedience, which ought to followe his grace, not onely particularly, but also generally among all true Christians. For, for this cause Dauid doth giue certaine assurance vnto the Catholicke Church of GOD, vnder the name of Israel: saying, that the Lord would deliuer Israel from all his iniquities, and purge them from all their sinnes: & although the Church be not without sinne during the
time

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time that it is in this earthly perigrinaton,
but hath wrinckles and spots subiect to ma-
ny infirmities and transgressions, by whom
it is as it were made captiue and brought in-
to bondage: yet God will deliuer it continu-
ally out of such miserie, and by his infinite
mercie forgiue it not some faults onely, but
all her iniquities how great soeuer they bee,
and of what number soeuer. Upon this hope
then, the Prophet exhorteth the Church to
trust in the Lorde, hoping in him in time of
oppression. when wee are in distresse and ex-
treame affliction. In as much as there is a-
boundance of mercie with him, he wanteth
no meanes to redeeme and drawe his out of
anguish and tribulation: his waies are infi-
nite, he needeth no good affection, being in-
clined and giuen by his owne nature to cle-
mencie and mercie.

Esay Chap. 1. ver. 18.

*Though your sinnes were as Crimfin, they shal
be made white as Snowe: though they were
made red like Skarlet, they shalbe as wooll.*



This is an excellent and comforta-
ble promise, which God hath made
to his auncient people, that of his
mercie

of the Soule.

mercie he hath put all their sinnes out of accompt, euen as though they had neuer bene committed: were they neuer so great and filthie, yet Gods mercie is greater: & therfore they ought not to dispayre. The Prophet declareth the small honor they shewed to God, and their wonderfull imperfections, when he giueth vnto them such opprobrious titles, calling them rebellious Children, a generation of Vipers, a people altogether giuen to iniquitie, a wicked seede, base bozne, corrupt children, yea, sparing none, no not one: he sayth that they are all naught, from the greatest to the lowest, from the head to the foote, both Priest and people, Magistrate and subiect are like to them of Sodome, and as the inhabitaunce of Gomorra, all defiled with murther, & shedding of innocent blood: yet GOD doth promise that he will neuer bring their sinnes to accompt, bee their iniquities neuer so greuous and monstrous, as the comparison of colours, euen of the red and bloudy colour, of the Skarlet and Purple dye sheweth: yet the Lord will make the as wooll, yea, as white as the diuen snowe, then the which, what can be whiter? Therefore the Lord setteth downe these wordes, to assure vs, by fit and probable similitudes, that

D

al.

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although their sinnes were ripe, and as it were dyed in graine, which will not easily alter or chaunge the colour: yet they shall be no more remembred, nor once appeare again before him, no more then the olde colour is knowne which hath taken on it a newe dye: So all the filthinesse and infamie that was found in them shall bee made very pure, and very cleane. And after this sort doth y^e Prophet pray, that if God would wash, purifie, and make him cleane againe from his sinne, then he should bee whiter then Snowe, and clearer, yea farre clearer then the Christall glasse. Psal. 51. ver. 9. And although it may seeme, that this promise was made particularly to the Iewes: yet notwithstanding it doth appertaine to vs also, that hereby wee might knowe, that the mercie of God is no lesse towardes vs, nor his arme shortned in our daies: but rather more amply declared, and shewed by the comming of his Sonne, and our Sauour Iesus Christ.

Esay

Esay Chap. 43. ver. 25.

I, euen I am he that putteth away thyne iniquities for myne owne sake, and will not remember thy sinnes.



Although our sinnes be as they were written with a pen of Iron, & with a diamond poynt, and profoundly engrauen in the tables of our harts, and in our soules, & noted by too much apparance: neuerthelesse the Lord our God doth certifie vs here, of the forgiuenesse of the, saying y it is himselte, which doth blot, put out, & rayse them in such sort, that they are not to be perceiued any moze, neither doe they appeare at any time befoze his face, no otherwise the if they had neuer bene committed, hee I say blotteth them out, not for one day, nor for certaine monethes or yerres, or for some space of time prescribed or limited, but continually and to the last gaspe, which is shewed by this phrase of speaking, for this word to blot out, is a perpetuall extinguishing of that, which hath bin manifested neuer to be in the like state againe, whereby we may learne, y we haue al neede of his great grace, not for a time, but vnto the end of our life, yea so long

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as sinne shal remaine in vs, for wee are euer molested and greeued, and therfore haue neede of mercie, as it is declared in the Romans, Chap. 7. vers. 23. 24. and in that hee saith, that it is he himselfe, which blotteth out our iniquities, he sheweth none other can do it but he, neither is there any creature either in heauen or in earth, that hath such power either in them selues, or from them selues. Now then we must learne, how this can be true, seeing it is sayd, that the Apostles and Shepherds of the Church of God haue received such authoritie to forgiue sinnes, as in S. Math. Chap. 18. vers. 18. and S. Iohn. Chap. 20. vers. 23. but this is by reason of their charge and ministry, and not that it belongeth to them selues properly, they may in deede remit the offences committed, but by and in the name of the Lorde, to whome they be Verraites and Ambassadors, it then belongeth vnto God onely to remit sinnes, for the which he will haue vs to be fully assured, in considering that it is himselfe which doth speake it, and which maketh this promise, euen he, which is eternall and euerslasting: euen he, which is good and full of mercie: this repetition and maner of speaking belongeth to him, in that it is sayde: I my selfe

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selfe forgive sinnes to this end, that we may not in any wise doubt, but therein wholly be perswaded by what meanes he is moued and stirred vp, for in blotting out our sinnes, hee declareth that it is for his name sake, it is not then for any worthinesse in vs, nor in consideration of any deserts of ours: Neither obtained by any Saints or indulgences found out by mans imagination, but by his free bountie, according to that which David doth desire of the Lord, that according to his great compassion, hee would blot out our iniquities, Psalme. 51. vers. 3. He addeth also for the confirmation of this, that which is spoken before, that he will not bring our sinnes to account, not that he is forgetfull, for wee must knowe, that all things be present vnto him, and before his eyes: but this is to shew, that he will not bring them to account, for to make punishment of them againe.

Esay. Chap. 44. vers. 22.

*I haue put away thy transgressions like a cloude,
and thy sinnes like a Mist, turne vnto mee
for I haue redeemed thee.*

FDrasmuch as sinne is nothing but filth
and durt, wherewith we be all infected
and abominably polluted, behold God

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which saith that hee himselſe blotteth them out, not in halfe, noꝝ in ſome part, but wholly, and altogether: neither moꝛe, noꝛ leſſe, but as a very thicke and darke cloude, which by the abundance and foꝛce of raine, and ouerflowing waters doe take and carry away with them ſelues the filthineſſe of the earth: ſo we when we be waſhed, and purified from ſuch filthineſſe, and faultes, hee will not haue vs retorne backe againe vnto the mud, there to deſile our ſelues, but willet̃ vs to cōtinue with him, ſetting vs in y^e faire way and obedience, which doth appertaine vnto him, not onely by nature & creation, but alſo by right of redemption, foꝛ he is our redeemer, and our pledge, which hath redeemed vs, and keepeth vs againſt all enimies.

Mich. Chap. 7. verſ. 18.

Who is a God like vnto the Lord, that taketh away iniquitie, & paſſeth by the tranſgreſſions of the remnant of his heritage, he retaineth not his wrath for euer, becauſe mercy pleaſeth him, hee will turne againe and haue compaſſion, he will ſubdue our iniquities, and caſt all our ſinnes into the bottome of the ſea, thou wilt perſorme thy trueth to
Jacob,

of the Soule.

*Iacob, and mercie to Abraham, as thou
hast sworne to our fathers in old time.*

TRuely there is none that may bee co-
pared vnto God, either in gentleness,
or in power: for he and none other re-
mitteth sinne, and although he met a sinner
in the way, (because all thinges bee present
vnto him) yet he will not stay himselfe to pu-
nish, but depart farther of, as though he took
no heede what is done, and leaue behind him
the offence committed. By this maner of
speech it is sayd, that God casteth our sinnes
backe from him. Esay Chap. 38. ver. 17. yet
onely to those which do properly appertaine
vnto him, whom he doth auouch & acknow-
ledge for his inheritance, and peculiar peo-
ple, who are of that Church, to whome hee
graunteth grace, from which all others bee
sequestred. And be it, that sometymes he doth
anger himselfe, and his wrath be mooued a-
gainst his owne iustly: yet it is not of long
continuaunce, in so much that hee is rather
prone to mercie and clemencie, then to seue-
ritie and rigor. And although he seeme by
our offences and vices to turne himself back
from vs, and to afflict vs, as we deserue: yet
he will returne againe, and wil shewe vs the

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sherefull and comfortable light of his countenance, in shewing compassion on vs, he forgiveth all our sinnes, by putting downe and destroying all the violence and force of death: so that we are no more houlden in captiuitie and bondage, but made free, and set at libertie by him, not by casting them on the ground onely, but by destroying, and deliuering vs from them, by throwing them into the botome of the Sea, that they may appeare no more, but the memorie of them passe away, as a thing which is bound vp and cast into the deepest Sea. And in this we see, that he is not mooued for any worthinesse that is in vs, but of his onely bountie and clemencie, being gentle and full of mercie, slowe to anger, and of great goodnesse by nature, faithful in his promises which he made vnto the fathers, and confirmed by his oth, and in these latter tymes fulfilled the bountifulnesse of his mercie in his onely Sonne: who is the onely pledge to assure vs of the forgiveness of our sinnes. And wheras the Prophet saith that God doth not onely forgive our sinnes, but passeth them ouer, not by putting them downe onely, but casting them into the botome of the Sea, for to abolish them wholly: it cannot be more plainly expessed or declared,

of the Soule.

red, how God forgiueth vs. Then, if in the tyme of the lawe and shadowes, his promise was not in vaine: how much ought we now to be moze certaine of it vnder the kingdome of Christ, by whome wee obtaine tructh and grace?

The grace of G D D towardes vs, by meanes of our Lord Iesus Christ.

Jeremy Chap. 31. ver. 31.

Beholde the day is come, sayth the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Iſrael, and with the house of Iuda. I will put my law in their inward parts, & write it in their hearts, and wilbe their God, and they shall be my people: I will pardon their iniquities, and will remember their sinnes no more.

This is the holy and happie alliaunce, that wee obtaine with God by Iesus Christ his Sonne, by whome, albeit we bee sufficiently taught, and instructed in the knowledge of his tructh, both in wil and affection to obey him, according to his commandements, yet we goe oftentimes astray, and doe against his deuine precepts, by the wickednesse and imperfections which remaines

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maynes in vs: wherefore we haue alwayes
neede of his grace, for the remission of our
sinnes, in the promise which hee hath made
vnto vs, as wee are taught in this place of
Scripture: which although it was made in
the auncient couenant of the lawe wherein
all things also are included, yet it pertaineth
properly vnto the newe promise, obtained by
Jesus Christ the very Sonne of GOD, the
sure foundation and perfect substance of our
saluation: for he is the mediator of the newe
Testament, as it is sayd in the Epistle to the
Heb. Chap. 9. It is he by whose desert all
our sinnes are forgiven, which could not bee
remitted by the outward figures, and vaine
shadowes of the lawe.

Esay Chap. 53. ver. 4.

*Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and ca-
ried our sorrowes: he was wounded for our
transgressions, & broken for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace was upon him,
and with his stripes wee are healed. The
Lord hath layd upon him the iniquities of
vs all, by his knowledge shall my iust seruāt
iustifie many, for he shall beare their sinnes.*

AS God is by nature gentle and merci-
full, so is he a seuerer and iust Judge: for
he

of the Soule.

he leaueth not sinne unpunished, but layeth
the punishment of it vpon his onely Sonne,
who in the fulnesse of time deliuered him for
vs vnto the shamefull and accursed death of
the Crosse, wherein his iustice and mercie is
founde by ioyning both together in an inse-
parable bond of vnitie. And first in that, that
Jesus Christ suffered for our iniquities: the
other in that, that he was well pleased to suf-
fer his Sonne to be a pledge, and an attone-
ment for vs. This then the Prophet teacheth
in this place, that Christ hath suffered for vs
an infinite number of griefes, torments, and
punishments, as touching his soule: he suffe-
red a death full of shame and reproch in the
worlde, to iustifie and deliuer vs from dam-
nation and eternal death, acquitting vs from
the wrath of God. Seeing then, that in hart
and affection wee acknowledge him for our
true Saviour and Redeemer, we neede not
to feare, although we shall perceiue, and ac-
knowledge our selues to be guiltie: yet wee
may bee assured, that wee are in peace with
God, because Jesus Christ our Redeemer
hath borne the paines due for our iniquities.
If Sathan then doe assaile vs by terrible i-
maginations of the paines and torments,
which we haue iustly deserued in respect of
our

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our iniquities, let vs present our selues in the rightuousnesse and holinesse of Iesus Christ: for he hath bozne our greefes, & layde our sorowes on him: he hath bene wounded, hurt, and murdered: he died for vs which are vniust, and rose againe for our sanctification, to the end he might iustifie and absolue vs.

Zach. Chap. 12. ver. 1.

In that day there shalbe a fountaine opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Ierusalem for sinne, and for uncleannes.

This is the fayre and cleare fountaine of grace, the liuely water that floweth to vs by Iesus Christ, by the shedding of his precious blood, which is opened to all those which are of the household of God, and made Citizens of the heauenly and spirituall Ierusalem, which is the true Church wherein they wash and purge their sinnes. Let vs therefore goe vnto this liuely water, and into this life euerlasting, where the one neuer stayeth running, and cannot be dyed vpon, nor the possessors of the other shall euer taste of the second death: for this spring floweth in great aboundance, so that we shalbe washed faire and cleane, bee our iniquities neuer so foule and polluted.

Math.

of the Soule.

Math. Chap. 11. ver. 18.

Come unto me all ye that are wearie and heauie laden, and I will refresh you.



The admirable and bountifull loue of the Lorde Iesus is in this place shewed, in that he vouchsafeth to helpe and succour those, which be poore and in miserie, he will not cast them away, neither send them to others to make their mone and complaints: but he calleth them himself vnto him, I say he, which is the very Sonne of God, the Lord of glory, calleth those vnto him which are oppressed, & troubled in their consciences by the feeling of their sinnes, and therefore promiseth to ayde them, and giue them rest, the true tranquillitie and happy quietnesse of the soule: Let vs goe therefore to Iesus Christ our onely Saviour and redeemer: let vs goe in a true faith, and earnest repentance, seeing he stretcheth forth his armes to receiue vs: seing he is sweet, gentle, mercifull, of great goodnesse. Are we therefore heauy loden with the burthen of our sinnes? he will deliuer vs from the yoke and seruitude of the house of bondage. Are we ouer hayled, and tyed by the tyrannie of sinne
and

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and death? he will preserve vs from the seruitude of the one, and from the deadly sting of the other.

Iohn Chap. i. ver. 29.

Behold the Lambe of God, which taketh away the sinnes of the World.



This is the testimonie that Iohn the Baptist witnesseth openly of our Lord Iesus Christ, who was ordained and sent of God to be the Lambe (without fault, without spotte) which in former times was figured in sundry Sacrifices of the law, yet more especially in the Passouer or Lambe, which was offered euerie day, morning, and euening for y sinnes of the Priest, and people: but this Lambe, when none was worthy to offer him vp to his father, hath willingly offered himselfe, that by dying once for al, he might obtaine forgiveness of sinnes for all: and by this meanes he hath brought vs vnto God the father, that he might continually, not for once acquite, and deliuer vs from our sinnes, which is shewed more forceable, if wee marke the worde which he useth (he doth take away) which is declared in the tyme present, and that by the merite of his death, which is alwaies of one and the same

of the Soule.

same vertue, and perpetual efficacie, where-
by we obtaine our eternall redemption: as
it is sayd by the authoꝝ to the Heb. Chap. 9.
And this benefite being so precious & great,
serueth not foꝝ one, oꝝ two onely, neither foꝝ
one onely Nation, but reacheth ouer al peo-
ple, and euery Nation of the earth, as this
word(world) proueth. Let vs not then doubt
that our sinnes are remitted by the death of
Christ, whose death should nothing auayle
vs, if we should not receiue the fruite of it by
faith in his promises, seeing that sinne dwel-
leth in vs continually, as it is proued in the
7. Chapter to the Romaines. Therefore we
receiue pardon foꝝ them continually by him,
who hath brought vs to the throne of grace,
where with boldnesse we may call his father
abba our father.

A&ts Chap. 5. ver. 31.

*This is that Iesus, which God hath lifted up
with his right hand, to bee a Prince and a
Saniour, to giue repentaunce to Israel, and
forgiuenes of sinnes.*

The Emppꝛe and seueraigne dominion of
Christ is here shewed vnto vs by S. Peter,
to the ende, he might declare vnto vs the po-
wer

The Consolatiōn

wer & spirituall libertie, which he bestoweth on his Church, meaning his people of Israel: that is to say, that by him our sinnes are remitted, with chaunge of newnesse of life, promised to our eternall saluation. These two graces then being ioyned together, can neuer bee seperated, that thereby none may doubt of the obtayning of this excellent benefite purchased by the Lord Iesus: which otherwise would pull back from his highnes, and debate his power, who will for these benefites be honoured in word, and glorified in deede.

Acts Chap. 13. ver. 38.

*Be it knowne unto you, that through this man
(our Saviour Christ) is preached unto you
forgiuenes of sinnes.*

This place is like vnto the former, concerning the benefite purchased by Christ, by whom we obtayne forgiuenes of our sinnes: a thing worthy of all men to bee had in memorie, of the which euery man ought to bee certaine, and resolved in the assurance of his saluation.

Rom.

of the Soule.

Rom. Chap. 5. ver. 8.

God sheweth his loue towards vs, seeing that while wee were yet sinners Christ dyed for vs, much more now being iustified by his blood: we shalbe saued from wrath through him, for if when we were enemies we were recõciled to God by the death of his sonne, much more being reconciled, shalbe saued by his life, and not onely so, but also reioyce in God through our Lord Iesus Christ, by whom we haue obtayned reconciliation.

This is to assure vs of y^e loue and mercie of God towarde vs, and of our saluation, when we consider what Christ Iesus hath done for vs, who beeing the Sonne of God, iust, and innocent, suffered so many torments for vs vniust, and guiltie, so that now wee are purged, and made cleare of al our faults and iniquities: yea, we are acquitted and absolved from the wrath and anger of GOD: who is wholly quieted, peace being made betweene him and vs by the reconciliation of the Lord Iesus, who is the meanes, by the vertue of his death, and preseruer of our life by y^e vertue and power of his dietie: for our life is hid in him, & our death is buried in him: in him
E there.

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therefore all our glory consisteth, for there is nothing wherein wee may glory our selues, nor our works, but onely in the great fauour and mercie of our God, and in the grace and mercie of our Lorde and Sauour Iesus Christ.

John 1. Epist. 1. Chap. ver. 7.

The blood of Iesus Christ cleanseth vs from all our sinnes.



Although we bee guiltie, and polluted with many sinnes, which are in the eyes of the Lorde stayned and filthy: yet the holy Apostle doth assure vs, that wee are washed and purified from them, not by any counterfeite water of mans fancie, nor by a fayned imagination of fire in Purgatorie, in any other worlde, neither by the blood of Martyrs, as some haue falsly taught, but only by the precious blood of the Sonne of God: which is of such efficacie, and continuall vertue, that he can blot out our sinnes perticularly how many soeuer they be.

John

of the Soule.

Iohn 1. Epist. Chap. 2. ver. 1.

If any man sinne, wee haue an aduocate with the father Iesus Christ the rightuous, and he is the reconciliation for our sinnes, and not for ours onely, but also the sinnes of the whole world.

There is none without sinne, and consequently al are guiltie before GOD: yet behold the Apostle witnesseth, that the Lord Iesus Christ doth pray, and make request for vs: as it is sayd in the Epistle to the Romaines Chap. 8. and to the Heb. Chap. 7. which intercession betweene God and man was of such force and vertue, that no others but he was found worthe and able to make vs vnderstande the gentle and fauourable goodwill of God the father: for he dyed for our sinnes, & vndertooke to make an agreement and reconciliation for our misdeedes to God: which excellent and worthy desert is not onely restrayned to some particuler person, but reacheth to all generally, that all might perceiue the loue of their Redeemer.

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Iohn 1. Epist. Chap. 3. ver. 10.

In this are the children of God knowne, and the children of the deuill: whosoever doth not rightly is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother: and this is appoynted a reward for sinnes.

This place is like vnto the place afore rehearsed, contayning more fully the loue, and mercifulnesse of **GOD** towards vs, in that he hath brought vs againe vnto him by his welbeloued Sonne, who gaue himselfe for vs.

Of faith in Christ, Ioh. Cap. 3. ver. 16.

God so loued the world, that he hath giuen his onely begotten sonne, that whosoever beleeueth in him should not perish, but haue life everlasting.

The beginning and first cause of our saluation is in **GOD**, who in his mercie and fatherly loue saued vs. The second is in Christ, who by the merite of his death & passion redeemed vs: the onely instrument and meanes to obtaine such great good is by faith in Iesus Christ, which is of such vertue and efficacie, that by it man is reconciled vnto
GOD

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God by the free remission of sinne: wherefore he cannot fall vtterly in as much as he is deliuered from eternall death, and made partaker of an happie life.

Iohn. Chap. 5. vers. 24.

Verely, verely I say vnto you, he that heareth my words and beleueth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life: and shal not come into condemnation, but passeth from death to life.

This is to confirme our selues in the assurance wee haue in Christ, and in the certaine perswasion of his doctrine, when as wee doe vnderstand that our faith resting in him, is not founded vppon a mortall man, but on the very and true sonne of God, wherefore it is sayde that we are iustified: that wee are sanctified in and by the bloud of Christ Iesus. Rom. Chap. 3. vers. 27. we be absolved from our sinnes, neither can bee condemned any wise, beeing so warranted by him, which is eternall, by whome we obtaine life and felicitie, which continueth for euer.

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Rom. Chap. 10. vers. 9.

*If thou shalt confesse with thy mouth the Lord
Iesus, and shalt beleue in thy heart that
God raysed him vp from death, thou shalt
be saved.*

How easie the way of saluation is vn-
to vs, S. Paule sheweth in this place,
not vsing many words, neither sen-
ding vs backe to the profound and deepe se-
crets of almightie God, but giueth vs to vn-
derstand, that by the grace of God which is
in vs, we are saved if so be we hold fast the
faith, not lightly in the Braine, but rooted
profoundly in the heart, apprehending per-
fectly Iesus Christ: which once died for our
sinnes, and rose againe for our iustification,
as it is in the 4. Chap. of this Epistle. And
although the confession of the mouth bee re-
quired: which principally serueth for an out-
ward testimony, and a manifest declaration
of the hope which is in vs, yet especially wee
must haue the heart lyne lye touched with a
sure perswasion of faith, whose mouth will
not bee stopped. Seeing that with the heart
we beleue: and with the mouth declare our
iustification, & as the Prophet saith in 116.
Psalme. vers. 10. I haue beleueed, and there-
fore I haue spoken.

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Acts Chap. 10. ver. 43.

To him do all the Prophets giue witnesse, that through his name all that beleue in him might receiue remission of sinne.

It is the by the meanes of faith in Christ, that we doe obtaine forgiveness of sinne if so be we assure and rest our selues wholly vppon the merrit and intercession of him, following the predictions and writings not only of the Prophets, but of those also which haue prophesied in the unitie of the same spirite, whereby we attaine fully all the promises of eternall life, by and through the meanes of Christ Iesus, and let this be for a full confirmation of this Article.

Of Repentance.

WHosoever so much as the grace of God and saluation hath appeared to all men, to the end we might giue ouer al unfaithfulnesse and worldly desires, and that we should liue iustly in all christianitie, seeing we be bought by the blood of the immaculate Labe Iesus Christ, and therefore ought to bee vnto him a peculiar people, giuen vnto all good workes, for
E 4 this

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this cause we must take great heede, that we abuse not the great benignitie and long sufferance of God, by continuing in sinne and iniquitie, which is the only meanes to heape vpon vs his wꝛath and vengeance to our condemnation. For whensoever we erre or fall into sinne, whether it be by the imperfection of our nature, or frailtie of our flesh (sufficient meanes to heape the burning coles of Gods seueritie vpon vs, if in iudgement hee should stand against vs) yet we must not deferre from day to day: but rent our heartes not our garments, and in earnest contrition of our soules, and sincere repenting by confessing our miserable estate, and desirous to bee loosed from the heauie burden of our sinnes, shewe all duetie and amendment of life. For as saint Cyprian saith, that the first degree of our felicitie, is to commit no sinne: To the second is to acknowledge our sinne committed. Therefore whensoever we fall (as who is not vncleane in the eyes of his Creator: And the righteous man sinneth seauen times aday) yet we must not lye groueling on the ground, but rayse vp our selues by faith in the promises of God, & in the hope of eternall life, assuring our selues, that he will receiue vs to mercie, and spred
vpon

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Upon vs his grace: for he is our Shepherd,
and wee shall not want: he hath placed vs as
a signet on his finger, and printed vs in the
pallme of his right hand, so that none shall be
able to plucke vs of, or blot vs out of his re-
membrance, but of his mercie he hath rege-
nerated vs, and made vs partakers of the in-
ward washing sealed into vs in the outward
Baptisme, and grafting vs into the bodie of
Christ by receiuing vs into his Church, ne-
uer to be hereafter excluded from his grace,
and forgiveness of sinne, though wee fall by
infirmities into the same sinne againe: which
may bee a confutation of the irreligious and
detestable opinion of the Nouations, rene-
wed by certaine Heriticks in our time, but
sufficiently reprobued and condemned by the
fathers out of the word of God: For seeing
the promises of God bee made onely for his
people and his Church, through grace and
mercie vnto them, which may appeare in the
effects of the same, by notable example of
worthy memorie hereafter declared, that if
in the tyme of the Law and old Testament,
God hath shewed himselfe fauourable to-
wards those, which of goodwil haue drawne
themselves towarde him: how much more
will hee spread abroad the bright beames of
his

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his mercie to vs, vnder y^e raigne of his sonne
Iesus Christ, by whom and through whom
he maketh vs free inheritours of the trea-
sures of his grace. Let vs see now what de-
claration wee haue of these thinges in holy
Scripture.

Deut. Chap. 4. ver. 30.

*When thou art in tribulation, and all these
things are come vpon thee, if thou returne
to the Lord thy God, and be obedient to his
voyce, for the Lord thy God is a mercifull
God, he will not forsake thee, neither de-
stroy, nor forget he swaie to thy fathers to
performe it.*

Moses speaketh in this place vnto vs
vnder the person of the people of Is-
rael, that thereby wee might make
our selues sure, that if by the vanities of our
mynde wee commit Idolatrie, and worship
strange Gods, therby corrupting our selues,
and deseruing the wrath of our God vpon
vs, by falling into diuers euilles and cala-
mities: yet if wee repent, and bee displeased
with our selues in hauing offended such a
mercifull GOD, and desiring to serue him
hereafter in holinesse and rightuousnesse all
the

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the daies of our life, he will cease from punishing, and performe his promises made in and by the meditation of his Sonne Christ Iesus.

Psalm. 51. ver. 19.

The sacrifice of God is a holy spirite, a contrite and broken heart, O Lorde thou wilt not despise.

These are the wordes of Dauid, which he setteth downe as a patterne and example of a true penitent man, stricken by the spirit of God, who declareth vnto vs, that in the feeling of his weakenes and unworthines, he is ouercome, he is afflicted in his soule, and sorrowfull in his heart, complayning for his sinnes, watering his couch with his teares, greeuously pained lyeth groning all the day long, he repenteth that he hath done amisse, he humbleth himselfe before his God in Sackcloth and Ashes: This is the man whose Sacrifice the Lorde receiueith, whose broken and contrite hart he neuer despiseth: who pleaseth him more then all the Sacrifices of the Beasts y haue hornes and houses, then the offrings of their newe Donies, and the giftes of high and proude hypocrites, then

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then all the vanities of the superstitious Idolatours, which thinke to honour and serue him with any faith and repentance.

Prouer. Chap. 28. ver. 13.

He that hideth his sinnes shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall haue mercie.

THe holy Ghost doth certifie vs here, that although there can no euill happen vnto him, which humbleth himself before God by acknowledging his sinne, and that there is grace, forgiveness & mercie offered to those which feeble themselves guilty, and acknowledge their transgressions, asking absolutiō and deliuerance by a true amēdment of life. I doe thinke this place of Scripture principally to be touched among the rest, because the holy Ghost of purpose setteth it downe to comfort the penitent Sinner, which are very sorie that they haue offended so heauenly a father, who is of long suffering and compassion, who is in Scripture named the God of all comfort and consolation: and therefore they will not hide their sinne, but confesse it vnto the Lord, who will heale all their infirmities, and cleanse them from their sinnes:

for

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for the Lord is mercifull vnto al such as call
vpon him, yea, al such as call vpon him faith-
fully. Hast thou then bene a blasphemmer, a
robber, a lyer? Hast thou giuen thy selfe to
Usurie? Art thou couetous? Hast thou bene
a Fornicator? an Adulterer? If thou leaue
thy blasphemie, forsake thy euill doing, shun
couetousnes as a Serpent: if thou flye from
the paths of the strange woman, and the de-
licious pampering of the belly: if thou flyest
from euill, and doest the thing that is good:
if thou abhorrest the bosome of the light wo-
man, & the alluring bed of the Harlot: doubt
not, but thy sinnes be forgien, the debt payd,
the wrath of God against thee is pacified by
the sight of the Lambe which standeth on the
Mount. Heare the wisdom of God, which
sayth, he that leaueth his sinne shall obtayne
mercie: Hast thou then left thy wickednesse?
Art thou become a newe man? Hast thou a-
mended thy euill life? God will shewe thee
mercie and compassion: we neede not to goe
farre to seeke proofes and testimonies of the
grace of God towards vs, the very amende-
ment of our life is an euident demonstration
of the same, which the Prophet David felt in
the 32. Psal: when he sayth, then I acknow-
ledged my sinne vnto thee, neither did I hide
myne

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myne iniquitie : for I thought, I will confesse against my selfe my wickednesse vnto the Lord, and thou forgauest the punishment of my fault. Therefore shall euery one that is godly make his prayer vnto thee in a time when thou maist be found: surely the flood of great water shall not come nere him. Thou art my secret place, thou preservest me from my trouble, and compasses me about with ioyfull deliuerance.

Esay Chap. 55. ver. 7.

Seeke ye the Lord while he may be found, call vpon him while he is neere. Let the wicked forsake his owne waies, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and returne vnto the Lord, & he will haue mercie vpon him, for he is ready to forgine. For my thoughtes are not as your thoughtes, neither are your waies as my waies saith the Lorde. For as the heauens are higher then the earth: so are my waies higher then your waies, and my thoughts aboue your thoughts.

Although by our offences we estrāge and withdraue our selues greatly frō God, he is neuertheless nere at hand if we draw our selues from our euill and sinfull

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full life: if we be touched with a true repentance: if wee commit our selues vnto him: if we call vpon him with all our hearts, & with all our soules, we may be sure he wil be mercifull vnto vs, as the Prophet sayth. And although our sinnes abound, yet his mercie aboundeth much moze: though our iniquities (as we thinke) are infinite, and without pardon, not esteeming the goodnes and clemencie of God, according to his greatnesse and infinite mercies, but according to the weaknesse and frailtie of our vnderstanding: yet wee see that the Lorde sheweth by his Prophet, that his thoughtes and his workes doe surpasse all that is in vs, or can come front vs. For although our sinnes were in number as the sande of the Sea, or as the starres of Heauen: yet we know that he holdeth the Sea in his hand, and calleth the Starres by their names: for as the Heauen is in comparison of the Earth, so are his mercies towards all that call vpon him. Why should any then mistrust the benignitie of GOD, seeing he is so carefull to assure vs of the forgiveness of our sinnes, whensoever we doe call vpon him.

Ezech.

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Exech. Chap. 18. ver. 21.

If the wicked will turne from his sinnes, that he hath committed, and keepe all my statutes, and doe all that is lawfull and right, he shal surely liue, and not dye: al his transgressions which he hath committed shall not be mentioned vnto him. Haue I any desire that the wicked should dye, saith the Lord, or shall hee not liue if he retourne from his waies? Therefore returne and repent you for your transgressions, so iniquitie shall not bee your destruction. Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherby you haue transgressed, and make you a newe heart, and a newe spirite: for why will you dye O house of Israel.

 **T**he Lord in this place speaketh not directly vnto the sinner, which falleth by frailtie and weakenesse of flesh, but to the wicked, which of mallice and crueltie hath robbed and shed innocent blood, who hath oppressed the needie, and solde the poore for olde shooes, who hath whined after his neighbours wife, & hath bene partakers with the Adulterers: which haue runned from Bethel to Dan, and from Dan to Bethel to serue Keraunge Gods: which haue sacrificed
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of their owne flesh to Golocke, and haue eaten the offringes of the dead: to these which take sinne as water, and drawe iniquitie with cords: to these I say speaketh the Lord, and telleth them, that if they doe truly repent them of all their misdeedes which they haue committed, they shal neuer be imputed to them againe, they shall be deliuered from them, and made partakers of eternall life, if his repentance be true, not fained, but peels himself wholly to serue his God, though his obedience be imperfect, and there bee some want in him: yet hee shall bee washed in the blood of the Lambe, by his woundes he shall be healed, and in his weakenesse he shall bee made strong: he shalbe holy, because he which hath called him is holy. And in this respect are Christians called of centymes iust in holy Scripture, though there bee some imperfections in them daylie to bee seene, yet this is shewed to declare the wonderful and great bountie and clemencie of God towards vs, that hauing offended him in breaking his ordinances, and so made guiltie of eternall death: yet that he vouchsafeth to call vs againe vnto him, and to stretch forth his arme all the day long to take vs vp when we were fallen, and exhorteth vs to repentance, and

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to newnesse of life, which is the token and euident testimonie of a true conuersion and newe regeneration by the holy Ghost. And whereas he commaundeth vs to repent, adding a promise of life and saluation, he sheweth that hee would haue vs touched to the quicke, and truely sorie for our faultes committed, with firme and stedfast purpose to liue better in time to come: so that here wee may knowe what kinde of man he is, which shall not perish, but shall haue eternall life, according to this promise.

Zach. Chap. 1. ver. 3.

Returne you vnto me saith the Lord of hosts, and I will returne vnto you.

Here is an other exhortation to repentance ioyned with the promise and reconciliation to God, very like vnto that before.

Math. Chap. 4. ver. 17.

Amend your liues for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.

This is the first exhortation that the Lord made to the people of Israel, agreeable to that where John Baptist admonisheth e-
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uery one to repentance and amendment of life: which that they may y better perfoyme, he addeth this reason and promise, that the grace of God, the remission of sinnes, and the reconciliation with God, is present and neere to them by the preaching of the Gospell, which is here called the kingdome of God: for by this meanes the tyranny of Satan is destroyed and ouerthrowne: the force of sinne dead: the kingdome of Christ gloriously extolled and lift vp on hye, raigning in the hearts of those, which by his spirite haue felt the vertue vnto newnesse of life, a sufficient token to assure vs in this life to be made partakers of his inheritaunce in the life to come.

Math. Chap. 9. 13.

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

This is the answer of our Sauour made to y Pharisees, who finding themselves offended that he and his companie did eate with Publicanes and Harlots, with sinfull and leaud liuers, thought him a glutton and loose fellowe. For these men counting themselves onely the people of GOD, erred and

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corrupted themselves, in such a sorte, that they accounted all other betterly profayne. Whereupon our Sauour Christ sheweth wherefore he leaueth their companies, who so much iustified themselves, and betaketh himselfe and all his to poore sinners, though they were wicked and euill in life, that by this means he might drawe them frō their vice and iniquities, and bring them into the right way. To those then, which doe repent of their sinnes, appertayneth the grace of God, for repentance is the very effect of the sonne of God, which bringeth saluation vnto all people.

Acts 3. ver. 19.

Amend your lines therefore and turne, that your sinnes may be put away.

Those to whom Peter spake in this place, had put and deliuered to death the holie and the iust, the Prince of life, that is to say, our Lorde Iesus Christ: yet he exhorteth the to a godly conuersation of life, promising that their sinnes shall bee forgiven them, so that the grace of God is shewed forth to all men, whom the Lorde counteth by putting from them their iniquities.

Acts

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A&S Chap. 5. ver. 31.

This is that Iesus whome GOD hath lift vp with his right hand to bee a Prince and a Sauiour, to giue repentance of sinnes to Israel, and forgiveness of sinnes.

This is spoken to this ende, that the Lord Iesus hath brought vs vnto saluation by repentance, which is neuer seperated from the forgiveness of sinne.

1. Cor. Chap. 7. ver. 10.

Godly sorowe causeth repentance to saluation.

The profayne and wicked men continually doe reioyce in their wickednesse, and harden their harts in their sinnes, neuer ceasing till their accursed ioye bee turned into weeping and gnashing of teeth, by the iust and feareful iudgement of God, who casteth all such into vtter perdition: but they, which haue the feare of God, after that they haue done amisse in any sorte bee greatly sorie in heart, weeping and lamenting that haue offended such a gracious God, and alwaies suffer extreme greifes because they offended him, in breaking his commandements. The rulers which had the ouersight of the church

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of Corinth, beeing reprehended by S. Paule for their slouthfulnes and slownes, in not acquitting themselves frō the slaunders, which was reported of them, had for this thing such a displeasure and sorowe in themselves, that the Apostle thought it commodious & profitable for their saluation. On which example he draweth this excellent and notable sentence, that the sorowe, which is according to the will of God for offending him in neglecting the charge committed to vs, is profitable. And this is drawne by an vsuall fashion, to bring the offender to repentaunce, and to indute a man into an ardent desire to do better in tyme to come: which is the way and perfect meanes to come into the porte of saluation: for such a kinde of repentaunce none ought to bee displeased, but rather bee glad and reioyce for it.

Ioh. 1. Epist. Chap. 1. ver. 9.

If wee acknowledge our sinnes, he is faithfull and iust to forgine vs, & to cleane vs from all our unrighteousnesse.

AS the poore sicke man ought to declare his disease to the Physitiō, thereby to receiue helpe of his grieve: euen so

So ought wee in like maner to acknowledge the spirituall desire of the soule before God, not that hee is ignorant of them, or that hee hath neede of any aduertisement: but to this ende, that we may beare witnesse of our sorrowfull repentaunce and humilitie, which shall neuer be without forgiveness of sinnes, apprehending the promises of God, who infallably will fulfill his workes, beeing true and iust in all his promises.

Of Prayer.

The great and wonderfull bountie of God is shewed, when he vouchsafeth to open the heauens vnto vs poore wretched creatures of the earth, making vs fit to enter into his glorious kingdome, laying downe his eare to heare and vnderstand our desires and requestes, and exalting the prayers which we make to him in our need, at such tyme as we be most poore and miserable, and in greatest daunger: but the care he hath of vs, and how much he loueth vs is seene in this, that hee himselfe warneth and stirreth vs vp, by teaching vs to pray, with assurance that he will graunt vs our requestes, which he fulfilleth when wee truely require

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him of his grace, goodnesse, & mercie, where of wee haue manifold testimonies in the word of **G D D**, which we will set downe as worth the noting.

Psal. 50. ver. 15.

Call vppon me in tyme of trouble, and I will helpe thee, and thou shalt honor me.

Although the time when in our soules we are afflicted by feeling our sinne, or otherwise be in tribulation or payne, or some perrill or daunger: may threaten vs that our God is offended with vs, and will destroye vs: yet he promiseth vs by the Prophet Dauid to deliuer vs from all euill, if so wee honor him, and earnestly desire in our prayers to haue him our aide, and refuge in our trouble.

Psal. 145. ver. 18.

The Lord is neere to all that call vppon him, yea to all that call vppon him in trueth, he will fulfill the desire of those that feare him, and will heare their crye and saue them.

Albeit sometyme it may seme that God should bee farre from vs, in that he doth
not

not so visibly appeare vnto vs, as he is wont,
yet we may be sure that he is not farre of, if
with our whole heart and affection we pray
vnto him, if wee bee moued by the feare and
reuerence of his name, to obeye him: if wee
call vpon him in this sorte, he will exalt vs,
and will deliuer vs from all our sinnes.

Psal. 6. ver. 1.

*O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, neither
chasten me in thy heauie displeasure: haue
mercie vpon me for I am weake, O Lorde
heale me for my bones are brused: my soule
is sore troubled, but Lorde how long wilt
thou delay. Returne O Lorde deliuer my
soule, saue me for thy mercie sake: for in
death there is no remembrance of thee, and
in the grane who shall praise thee.*

FOr as much as Dauid sayth in the 34.
Psalme, that the eyes of the Lorde are
vpon the iust, and his eares are readie
to heare their mone, in harkening vnto them
when they crye, and deliuering them from al
their tribulations: and least some men might
thinke, that poore sinners are cast away frō
God, and he wil not vouchsafe to heare their
requestes, wee heare the Prophet Dauid
praying

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praying vnto him, not as a iust man, but as one feeling himselfe greatly guiltie of his infirmities, as it is plainly shewed in the 38. Psalm: of the like sort also is it when he confesseth his iniquities to haue ouerwhelmed him, which like a burthen is heavier then he is able to beare: For all this, yet he testifieth that although he were poore and miserable, by reason of his sinnes, yet God had accepted his prayers, and taken pitie and compassion on him.

Psalm. 86. ver. 3.

Be mercifull vnto me O Lord, for I crye vnto thee continually, reioyce the soule of thy seruant, for vnto thee O Lord do I lift vp my head. For thou O Lord art good, mercifull, and of great kindnesse to all them that call vpon thee.

DAuid beeing in calamitie, desired of God to bee restored in his soule, putting the assurance of his prayers vpon the naturall loue of God, who is by nature gentle, and mercifull, according to his promise: yea, he is the very selfe same foundation, vpon which the poore afflicted ought to comfort and reioyce themselves in heart
and

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and soule, and by feruent prayer vnto God
be deliuered from their iniquities.

Ioel Chap. 2. ver. 32.

*Whosoever calleth vpon the name of the Lord
shall be saved.*

AS faith is neuer without repētance,
so it cannot bee without helpe, good-
nesse, and soueraigne power of God,
by calling vpon him according to his promi-
ses, to the ende wee may get his fauour and
grace, which is here promised vnto vs, as a
consolation and comforte in the greatest mi-
serie and affliction that we haue: whosoever
then of what condition or estate he bee, whe-
ther rich or poore, great or small, that doth
acknowledge his omnipotent and infinite
power, if he humble himselfe before his Ma-
iestie, and heartely pray him for mercie, let
him assure himselfe that he shall bee exalted,
and that God will be fauourable vnto him.

John

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John Chap. 16. ver. 23.

Truely & truly I say vnto you, whatsoeuer you shall aske my father in my name he shall giue it you, aske and you shall receiue, that your ioye may be full.

This is the Sonne of God our Sauiour Christ which speaketh, and maketh vs certaine that our prayers are exalted: not for our owne worthinesse, but by his fauour: not by the desert of any creature either in heauen or earth, but in and for his sake onely, who is our aduocate and redeemer. Upon this confidence he doth warne and teach vs to pray vnto his father with this promise, that we shall neuer bee sent emptie away, but after this mortalitie hath put on immortallitie, this corruption shall put on incorruption: we shall be receiued into ioy and consolation for euer.

Ion 1. Epist. Chap. 5. ver. 14.

This is the assurance that we haue of GOD, that if wee aske any thing according to his will, he will heare vs. And if we know that he heareth vs, whatsoeuer we aske, we know that we shall obtaine, that we haue desired of him.

WE cannot be in doubt when we come to God in our prayers grounded on his

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his commaundements and promise, but that we shall be heard and receiue such things as we want, which condemneth those men that call vpon strange Gods: yea, on those which are no Gods, and pray to those which are departed out of this life, who can haue no certaintie of their prayers. But wee must bee certaine, that GOD doth hearken vnto vs when wee pray to him, as wee are taught in his holy worde: for he hath promised to giue and graunt vs such things as we aske him, being necessary and conformable vnto his will, which are the meanes whereby he useth to doe vs good, and to giue vs his grace in full and conuenient tyme.

Rom. Chap. 8. ver. 26.

Likewise the spirite also helpeth our infirmities, for wee knowe not how to pray as wee ought, but the spirite maketh request for vs with sighings, which cannot bee expressed, but he which searcheth knoweth what is the meaning of the spirite, seing he maketh requestes for the Saints according to the will of God.

AS by the holy Ghost wee are lead to the true knowledge of our saluation: so by it
we

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We are made certaine of the same, being the
seale and earnest of our inheritance, which
testifieth with our Spirit, that wee be the
sonnes of God in that wee hate all euill, and
on the contrary take pleasure in the lawes
of the Lord. For it is the Spirit which com-
forteth vs in our affliction, and strengthned
vs in our weaknesse, in making vs beare pa-
ciently the burden of our tribulation and ad-
uersities: in so much, that our affections be-
ing at variance among themselves, & many
tymes slowe to prayer, are yet stirred vp by
the holy Ghost, who teacheth vs to stay our
selues vpon the promises, that we are to aske
of God with desire and earnest affection of
heart, which cannot bee declared in wordes.
By this meanes are our prayers exalted to
God, and accounted iust and reasonable,
being made by the holy Ghost, which is the
Spirit of God, God who acknowledgeth
and accepteth that which is his, and procee-
deth from him by giuing vs deliuerance, and
adiudge vs vnto saluation. Seeing then that
our prayers ought to bee ordered according
vnto the will of God, and done in such since-
ritie and singlenes of heart, we may comfort
our selues in the vertue of his grace, and o-
peration of the holy Ghost. To this is added
that,

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that; which the Apostle teacheth in this Chapter, that by the spirite of adoption wee may boldly crye abba father. In this maner then ought wee to aske in faith, and certaintie without doubting, (as S. James exhorteth vs) being founded vpon the assuraunce, that wee haue of the fatherly goodnesse of God towards vs, by the holy Ghost.

Parables, & similitudes of the grace & mercie of God towards poore sinners, which do repent them selues.



It is manifest not onely by all the sayinges which heretofore are shewed, and other places of holy Scripture to the same purpose, touching the grace of God proffered vnto vs by the forgiuenes of our sinnes: but also by certaine Parables and Similitudes, which serue vs as promises, and which our Saviour Christ hath vled for our comfort: as we may reade in the 15. of S. Luke. The first is of the Sheepe that went astray, and was lost in the wilderness, whome the Sheeheard seeketh earnestly, and finding it, taketh it vpon his shoulders, bringeth it home, and reioyceth more ouer that

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that one, then for the nintie and nine which he had: in like sorte (saith our Saviour) is it in Heauen, for one sinner that repenteth himselfe. Hath Iune then deceiued thee? hath it caried thee away from the flocke of Christ, and made thee stray from the right path? Art thou in the midst of a Desert, in daunger of a roying Lyon, the enemye to thy saluation? Withdrowe thy selfe betimes, and recant of thy straying, and goe to thy flocke, least thou perish utterly: returne vnto thy soueraigne Shepheard Iesus Christ, which will bee gentle vnto thee, neither stande in doubt but that he wil receiue thee, if thou returne to him, seing he goeth seeking and calling those which goe astraye to bring them into his fould: and when thou art returned be not afrayde, but be sure of thy saluation, and reioyce, for the Angels in heauen reioyce for thee.

Luke. Chap. 16. ver. 18.

As a woman which hath lost a peece of siluer, after she hath found it againe reioyceth: so doth the Angels of God for a sinner which doth repent.

Although we lose our selues by our owne fault, & bee guiltie of our estraying from God,

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God: yet for all this he holdeth vs so deare and precious, and hath such care of vs, that he will neuer forget vs; but prouideth for our saluation, bringeth vs to himselfe, keepes vs as his owne, even as though he should keepe some excellent treasure: for which the celestiall and heauenly Angels doe sing for ioye and gladnesse.

Luke Chap. 15. ver. 11. 12.

By the goodnesse of the father towarde his prodigall sonne, our Sauour sheweth the great clemencie of God our celestiall father towards poore sinners, which conuert themselves vnto him.

If by the lightnes and foolishnesse of our mindes, and by the vanities of our harts we haue abused the goodnes of God, either temporally or spiritually, & by our owne meanes are drawne from his commaundements in slothfull and dissolute life, and so fallen into confusion, by feeling our pouertie and miserie? let vs not feare to turne againe to our God with true humblenes, acknowledging our misdoedes, seeing he is gentle and mercifull, he will receiue vs as his children, he will clothe vs with his benefices and spiri-
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tuall graces, with all ioye and mirth.

By the Parable and Similitude of the Publicane, acknowledging himself a poore sinner, standing a farre off, and thinking himselfe unworthie to lift vp his eyes to heauen, striking his breaſtes, and bewayling that he had neglected the mercies of God: our Saviour makes vs certaine, and perswades vs of the iustification and mercie for our sinnes, if truely we feele our selues guiltie: if we be beaten and humbled in our harts: if we haue a true displeasure, and are sozie that we haue offended our God: if wee be so touched, wee shall finde him gentle and quiet towards vs.

*Worthy examples touching the great mercie
of God towards poore sinners.*

Although many promises and excellent proofes be here set before vs, as sufficient to quiet the conscience of euery one: notwithstanding it shall be needefull to set forth some examples, for more certaintie and confirmation of the same, seeing that such examples and instructions do stirre vs vp the more to consider better of the matter. Wherefore, as in our first father Adam sinne began to appeare: so in him also God shewed

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shewed the first token of mercie, when he saw
him lost and fallen into death, he was care-
full to raise him and set him vp againe, his
clemencie he shewed there to be so much the
greater, and his goodnes declared it selfe so
much openly: for after he had done so much
good, and shewed him such fauour to create
him after his own likenesse, hauing commit-
ted to him the sole authoritie and dominion
of all things which are vnder heauen, onely
aduertising him to obediēce, which he ought
in tructh to haue performed: yet among all
these things so easie, he lendeth his eares to
the craftinesse of Sathan, rather then to the
voyce of his God, and at the length fell into
infidelitie and vnthankfulnes towards him:
yet he left him not, nor gaue him ouer in such
euilles, but goeth after him, although he had
despised and offended him so much, neither
stayeth he till Adam came to seeke him: yea,
the Lorde goeth first to finde him, not to a-
uenge himself, or to chide him by hard repre-
hensions, as in good right he might doe, but
to bring him to the knowledge of his sinne,
and to giue him helpe for his saluation. Oh
the goodnesse of God, how marueilous and
how wonderfull are his doinges, his mercie
is excellent and great: for who knoweth not

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that where iniquitie aboundeth, there his grace aboundeth much more.

The sinne of Lot was no light sinne in committing incest (without thinking on it) with his owne daughters, yet God had mercie on him, (as S. Peter testifieth) calling him a iust man, not in respect of the abhominable deede, but because of the grace of God which shewed it self in him, for y^e iust works and godlinesse, that were in him all his life tyme.

Jacob hath not bene guiltles, for defiling himselfe by incest with his two wiues being sisters: yet God ceased not to continue his grace and fauour towards him, following the promise made to his posteritie for euer.

The xii. Patriarks the children of Jacob, are accused for many diuers great faulces and misdoedes: as Ruben the first borne defiled his fathers bed with Bilha one of his Concubines. Iuda did the like with Thamar his daughter in lawe, and although he knewe her not, yet he is not excused.

Simeon and Leuy, shewed themselves altogether unfaithfull, disloyall, cruell, and bloodie in the murther of the Shechemites. The other brethren mooued with wrath, and fed with hatred, were like murthers on Joseph

seph their younger brother, they were so impudent and without humanitie, that they cared not to afflict their old father, by making him thinke that some wild beast had deuoured his sonne and their brother Ioseph: notwithstanding, for all their misdeedes, God hath bene mercifull and blessed them.

The sinne of Aaron is in no wise to be excused, although he had this honour of God to beare his worde with his brother Moses to the people of Israel, and before the King of Egypt, being ordayned an high Priest, a ruler of his Church in the seruice was instituted by the lawe: yet he became so slouthfull of so small courage, that he suffered himselfe to bee guided by the affection of the blinde people, ignorant, and superstitious, and not onely consented to them in their wicked interprice, but he himselfe became a workman and founder of their Idoll, and a minister to their Idolatrie, setting vp the Alter, and appointing a feast to be solemnized for the seruice of their Calfe: for which Moses his brother reprobued him very sharply, as though he had bene onely the cause of this euill: for he had by this meanes destituted, and disapointed the people of the grace of God, who was readie to giue them ouer into the handes of

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their enemies: as we may reade in Deut. 9. Chap. vers. 22. Yet his wrath was pacified, neither ceased he to continue his goodnesse towards him, but raised and established him to the office of the high Priest.

It happened also that after ward he committed a great fault, when he contented not himselfe with the great office of the high Priest, which was graunted him and his sonnes for ever, but enuied his brother Moses, accusing him as an vsurper, in taking on him the gouernement of the people, for which hee esteemed himselfe as worthe as Moses was. For which cause, though y^e Lord was angrie against him, and his Sister, and stroke them with Leprosie for the space of seauen daies, (a iust punishment for such a quarrell) yet he v^sed so great clemencie towards them, that his wrath went no farther, and healed them.

After that Dauid had concealed his flight from Saul vnto Abimilecke, and reporting not the trueth, was some cause y^e 85 Priestes were put to death by the commaundement of Saule, their townes were destroyed and sacked, and all the dwellers therein passed on the edge of the sword, both men, women and childzen. Afterward being placed in the
Crowne

Crowne by the singuler grace of God, who had deliuered him from so many daungers, and made him happely to raigne, and fought so many worthe victozies, conquering all Gods and his enemies in the lande, made them tributaries to him: yet when the Soldiours fought against the Ammonites, and besieged the Citie of Rabba, the Arke of the Lorde beeing in Campe, he began to liue in ease and pleasure, remayning quietly in Ierusalem, at which tyme he committed adulterie with Bethsabeth, not by the infirmitie of the flesh, as if had not other meanes to satisfie his incontinencie, and to quench the heate of his lust: but by a disordered desire, which made him commit whoredome with his Subiects wife: and this also made his sinne much more greuous, considering the tyme whercin he should haue bestowed himselfe in praier for the good estate of his kingdom, and the Arke of God: neither was he so satisfied, (but cloked sinne with sinne) for he caused Arias his faithfull subiect to be murdered by the enemies of God, thereby to couer the sinne of adulterie: but after hee knewe his sinne, and God had receiued him to mercie, he repented him of his misdoedes, and receiued grace and fauour frō the Lord.

Great and filthie were the finnes of Manasse the King of Iuda: for he builded vp the high places that his father Ezechias had plucked downe, and worshipped the Planets as the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres, and prophaned the walles of the Temple with the Alters that he caused to bee built, following al the abominations of the Gentiles. he burnt his sonnes in the fire looking himself on them: he receiued Sorcerers, and familiar Spirites: he vsed Witchcraft, and set vp grauen Images in the house of God, expressly against the commaundement of the Law: neither did he this himselfe, but caused the people also to goe astray and do the like: and which is more, he reiecteth the attonement which was made vnto him and his fathers, but gaue himselfe more and more vnto euill, and sold himselfe altogether to work wickednesse in the sight of the Lord: he shed in Ierusalem much innocent blood, and put to death, those which did reprove him, because they would not frame themselves according to his abominations. For these thinges the wrath of GOD was kindled against him, in so much that he was overcome of the Asserians, and lead captiue to Babylon bound with chaynes: but being there in
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anguish, he humbled himselfe to God, confessing that he had beene wicked, cruell, and abhominable: at whose complaint God had mercie on him, deliuered him from such miserable bondage, caused him to returne to Ierusalem, and set him in his kingdome againe, who beeing thankfull to his God for his goodnes, tooke away the strange Gods, pulled downe the Alters, and established the pure seruice of GOD, with a straight commandement to all his people to obserue it, giuing in this a full testimonie of his true repentance and conuersion to God: by this we haue an example, and euident apparant signe of the infinite mercie of GOD towards vs poore and miserable sinners, to this end, that none dispayre in his sinnes how great and filthie soeuer they bee: for (as I haue shewed out of Gods word) where sinne aboundeth, there grace aboundeth much more.

It was a great and filthie offence, when many of the high Priests and Leuites in the tyme of the Captiuitie, and when the wrath of God was spred ouer them, and ouer al the people because of their iniquities, who neuer thought on their transgressions, nor sorrie for their sinnes, in turning to the Lord by a true repentaunce, but forgot what he had com-

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Commaunded them, & tooke strange wiues, lincking themselves to straunge people, betrothing their sonnes and daughters in marriage, and mingling by this meanes the holy seede with prophane people, a thing generally forbidden to all the people of G D D. Deut. 7. 3. but especially prohibited in Leuit. 21. 14. Yet when Elzas a soueraigne high Priest, a Scribe of the law, a righteous man vnderstood this disorder and confusion, he was very sorie, and greatly offended, making lamentation before G D D for it. The people also were taken with feare and trembling, acknowledging their faultes, and by the commaundement of Elzas, sent away their strange wiues with their children, making certaine Offringes in respect of their sinnes, and so the bountie and mercifulnesse of God remayned among them.

There was a woman sayth S. Luke in the 7. Chapter of the Gospell, which was of euill life, who hauing cast her self at the feete of Iesus Christ weeping, receiued of him such ioye and consolation, to assure her selfe that her sinne was forgiven her though they were neuer so great.

There was also sayth the selfe same Euangilist in the 19. Chapter, a man called Zacheus,

Zacheus, who was a principall Maister of the Custome, rich, and of a wicked life: yet when Iesus promised to lodge with him, he shewed that hee was come to seeke and save that which was lost, by which meanes this poore sinner was receiued into grace, with a true repentance, and goodwill to satisfie againe the hurt which he had done to others.

I pray you beholde the fall of S. Peter, it is an example to euery one, who being one of the twelue Apostles and Doctors of the worlde, brought vp in the knowledge of the Lord, by seeing his wonderful myracles, and being one of the thre witnesses which saued his glorie in the Mountaine, promised neuer to forsake him, neither in prison or in death: yet his infirmitie was so great, and so fearefull, that he not onely forsooke him, but forswore him thre tymes: yet the Lorde in mercie had compassion on him, and behelde him though he had made himselfe vnworchie of the honozable office whereunto he was ordained: but repenting & weeping in teares, was one of the first which was called vnto his office, and fitted with the giftes of the holy Ghost, to be a seruaunt and faithfull witness, a couragious and valiaunt Martyr of Iesus Christ.

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The unhappie and wicked man, which for his misdeeds was hanged on the Crosse, had his recourse vnto Iesus Christ in the tyme of death, and was not cast away but receiued into ioye and consolation, with promise, that after his death, not after many peeres, or some space of tyme, or after he had bene in the forged fire of Purgatorie, but presently whē he should end this mortal life, he should be with Christ in Paradise.

He was truely execrable, which was cut of from the number of the faithfull by the Church at Corinth, because against all honestie and ciuility, he did entertaine and vncouer the nakednesse of his fathers wife: for which cause, although he well deserued to be deliuered to Sathan, excommunicated, and vtterly cut off from the mysticall bodie of Christ: yet the Apostle S. Paule seeing his repentaunce, and vnderstanding the punishment which the Church had layd vpon him, vled clemencie & compassion, neither would haue the man to suffer any greater seueritie, but to haue some regard in comforting him, for feare hee should bee swallowed with too great sadnesse. See here what examples the holy Ghost setteth forth in holy Scriptures, as pure & cleare testimonies, to proue the
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the great and inestimable mercies of God
towardses poore sinners, which doe conuert
themselves with all their harts, without dis-
simulation vnto him, by a true repentaunce
and amendement of life. These examples be
of some force to those whom God hath recei-
ued lately vnto the communion of his grace,
when as he made a way vnto the Gentiles,
and called them vnto his Church: All those
then, which haue bene before named were of
the people of God, & of his house: of which,
some haue sinned against the first Table: o-
thers against the second: others against both
by monstrous misdoedes: some haue robbed:
some murdered, and done dissolutely. Some
haue committed Adultery, Fornication, and
Incest. Some Apostaties, Idolators, and
reuolters from the trueth. Some giuen vn-
to Witchcraft: all they neuerthelessse haue
bene receiued into the mercie of God. O the
wonderfull loue of the Lord, how excellent
and full of compassion is he? Who would
not be rauished to beholde his stedfastnesse?
Who would not trust in him to reioyce and
comforte himselfe in his mercies? who is a
strong hold for the poore afflicted, a refuge
for those that be amased and desolate, a com-
fort to those which are in calamitie, y whole
hope

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hope of the poore. It is thou O Lord, which doest surmount all our iniquities, thou swallowest them downe, and bringest them to nothing, by acquitting and deliuering vs from them. Is there any then that feeleth himself guiltie of any great fault, or any sinne committed after they haue bin instructed in their saluation, occuppying a place in the Sheepe-fould of the Lord: let him not dispayre in the clemencie of God, seeing he hath here fayre examples before his eyes to followe for his comfort.

Seeing then it is so by so many places of holy Scripture, and by the promises of God by good examples, liuely exhortations of the grace and mercie of God offered to vs presently, and set forth by the loue of his beloved sonne our Lord Iesus Christ: let vs be certaine and full assured, that if wee beleeue and truely repent, and call vpon him with a true heart and affection, he will be pacified with vs, what offence soeuer wee haue committed, he will wholly forgive vs. This is then the consolation in myne affliction, for thy word O Lord hath quickened mee.

Psalm. 119.

FINIS.



